

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3641

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT MOVES TO ELIMINATE KATHAREVOUSA FROM THE
SCHOOLS

1. THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT FORMALLY INTRODUCED ITS LONG
AWAITED EDUCATIONAL REFORM BILL TO PARLIAMENT APRIL 7.
AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL IS THE ONE
WHICH WILL MAKE STANDARD SPOKEN GREEK (DEMOTIKI), RATHER
THAN THE MORE FORMAL KATHAREVOUSA, THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRU-
TION AT ALL LEVELS OF GREEK EDUCATION.

2. THE LANGUAGE ISSUE HAS BEDEVILED GREEK POLITICS FOR
YEARS. KATHAREVOUSA ITSELF HAS TORMENTED GREEK STUDENTS
FOR GENERATIONS, AND THE NEED TO TEACH AND LEARN TWO
DIFFERENT LANGUAGES HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE GENERALLY POOR
QUALITY OF GREEK EDUCATION. BUT DESPITE A WELL-DOCUMENTED
CASE TO ADOPT DEMOTIKI AS THE ONLY LANGUAGE, CONVSERVATIVE
FORCES FOR MANY YEARS WERE ABLE TO RESIST EFFORTS TO END
THE USE OF KATHAREVOUSA.

3. IN BACKING THE CHANGE, THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT HAS
PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED SOME OF THE FAR RIGHT. HOWEVER, THE
VAST MAJORITY OF GREEKS SUPPORT THE MOVE -- AND IN MAKING
IT, CARAMANLIS HAS AGAIN STOLEN AN ISSUE FROM HIS OPPOSITION.
THUS, MINISTER OF EDUCATION GEORGE RALLIS MAY BE CORRECT

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IN DECLARING THAT THE DRAFT LEGISLATION INCLUDES

KATHAREVOUSA'S "BURIAL CERTIFICATE". STEARNS

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